

Let Us Begin The New Year

"And Jehovah spake unto Moses, saying, 'On the first day of the first month shalt thou rear up the tabernacle of the tent of meeting...'" (Ex.40:1,2) This commandment was given to Moses on the second year after the children of Israel came out of Egypt. Why did God choose the "first day of the month" of the year for the construction of the tabernacle? The Bible does not say, but God had His reasons. Perhaps it was for Israel's benefit, to make the work more memorable to them. Certainly, it is well to begin a new year with some good work, and begin serving God with a renewed vigor and determination.

There is something about the passing of the old year and the beginning of the new that makes a man want to do better. This is evident with all the resolutions that are made about this time of the year. Often we omit making a self-appraisal of our spiritual condition, but perhaps this should be a priority. As we begin the new year, let us consider ways of serving God better than we have in the past. Perhaps we can do better than what we have been doing.

Let us give serious consideration of the fact of death. The psalmist said, "So teach us to number our days that we may get us a heart of wisdom." (Psalms 90:12) Job's solemn reflection was, "When a few years have come, I shall go the way whence I shall not return." Far too many of us live as if we had a perpetual lease on life. The conscious apprehension of approaching death will make one more careful; will sober one's thinking about the seriousness of sin. (Cf. Ezek. 18:20) Both death and accounting for sin are appointed. "As it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this cometh the judgment." (Hebrews 9:27) Job lived 140 years after he said "when a few years are come," but even that was not many. "Jehovah, make me to know mine end, and the measure of my days, what it is; Let me know how frail I am." (Psalms 39:4) David prayed, "So teach us to number our days." (Psalms 90:12)

As we seriously contemplate the fact of death, it will serve to make us better. It

will help us keep ourselves in a constant state of preparation. "Watch therefore, for ye know not the day nor the hour." (Matthew 25:13) We will also make better use of our time while it lasts. We are taught to, "redeem the time..." (Eph.5:16) There is much to do, but time is short. "Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with all thy might." (Ecc. 9:10) Realization of the brevity of life will help us cease serving things of this present world. These things will end. (1Cor. 7:29-31; 1John 2:15-17) Should you die this year, will you die "in the Lord?" Let us think seriously of our present state and resolve to serve God better this year.

Let us examine ourselves. The chief butler said, "I do remember my faults this day." (Gen.41:9) We often reflect on the faults of others, and imagine because we are free from their faults, we are faultless. Paul said, "Try your own selves, whether ye are in the faith; prove your own selves." (2Cor.13:5) Let us make a deliberate effort to recognize our own faults, remember them and make correction.

Let us determine to abandon every form of sin. Elihu, the friend of Job said, "If I have done iniquity, I will do no more." (Job 34:32) What a noble resolution. Paul admonished, "Abstain from every form of evil" (1Thes.5:22) Sin must be acknowledged. Please read, Jer. 3:11-13. Forgiveness and mercy is promised upon confession. (1John 1:9) The wisdom writer stated, "He that covereth his sins shall not prosper; but whoso confesseth and forsaketh them shall have mercy." (Prov. 28:13)

The new year is unexplored and unknown. As Israel approached the Jordan river to enter the promise land, specific orders were given as to how they should progress. The explanation was, "Ye have not passed this way heretofore." (Josh.3:4) Because we have not passed this way before, we must be careful how we walk. (Eph.5:15-16) The apostle Paul expressed it this way, "According to my earnest expectation and hope, that in nothing shall i be put to shame, but that with all boldness, as always, so now also Christ shall be magnified in my body, whether by life, or by death. For me to live is Christ, and to die is gain." (Phil. 1:20-21) Does this accurately represent your commitment unto Christ? Let us

make the sobering decisions necessary that we might enter into the new year committed to better service to Him who died for us. (This article is from "I Press... the bulletin from Lancaster Church, Micky Galloway)